



**CCMG Statement on First Phase of Long-Term Observation
Pre-Election Period: 8-28 March 2021
23 April 2020**

To effectively observe the general political environment leading up to the August 12, 2021, general election, CCMG recruited, trained, and deployed 330 long-term observers (LTOs). LTOs monitor electoral activities such as voter education and information, political campaign activities, activities of marginalized groups (youth, women, and PWDs), election-related violence, and the use of hate speech and language that may incite violence and are also trained to report any critical incidents they witness or hear of immediately. The 330 LTOs cover all constituencies, districts and provinces and have now reported on the first phase of their observation from 8 March – 28 March.

CCMG has analyzed the observers' reports of issues they witnessed or heard of during the period on the pre-election environment and shares the following key highlights and trends:

Political Violence, Property Destruction, Military Attire and Abusive Language

- **There were 5 incidents of political violence and 1 report of arming political supporters.** Three (3) political violence incidents occurred in Copperbelt Province, 2 of which were around Youth Day when PF and UPND supporters clashed and 1 which was intraparty violence with PF among the supporters of different candidates; 1 political violence incident occurred in Western Province where a man with unidentified political affiliation who pulled down PF chitenges was beaten by PF supporters, resulting in severe injuries; and 1 incident occurred in Muchinga Province, but details could not be ascertained. In addition, there was one report of both PF and UPND supporters in Lusaka Province armed with crude weapons. Police intervened to stop the violence in one of the Copperbelt Youth Day incidents, but the report from the Western Province incident indicates that traffic police who were present did not intervene until the injuries were significant.
- **There were 3 incidents of destruction of materials.** In Copperbelt Province, there was one report of the destruction of PF chitenges in a marketplace by unknown people and one report of the destruction of UPND materials by PF party supporters. In Western Province, there was the pulling down of PF chitenges in the political violence incident noted above.
- **Three percent (3%) of CCMG observers witnessed or heard of party cadres wearing military or combat-like attire.** All were reported to be affiliated with PF.
- **There were multiple incidents of abusive or insulting language:**
 - There were 8 incidents of abusive and insulting language aimed at women officials, candidates or voters or of sexist language regarding women's ability to lead.
 - There were three incidents of abusive language among party youth, with PF and UPND youth cited in all three.
 - There were two intraparty uses of abusive language by PF candidates or supporters.

Collection of NRC and/or Voter's Card Details

- **There were 13 reports by 5% of CCMG observers of either buying or collecting NRC and/or voter's card details (4%) or the voter's card itself (1%).**
 - Eight (8) of these reports were from Copperbelt province and in 4 cases the identity of those collecting these was unknown and in 4 cases the reports indicate the persons were PF supporters or aspiring candidates. Of the 5 remaining reports, one was in Central Province by Leadership Movement Party supporters, 1 was in Muchinga Province by unknown individuals, 1 was in Northern Province by a chief, 1 was in Lusaka Province by both PF and UPND supporters and 1 was in Southern Province by PF supporters. In 6 of the cases, money was offered in exchange for the information or cards.



Use of State Vehicles and No Number Plate Vehicles

- **There were two incidents of government vehicles being used to campaign by PF representatives.**
- **There were two incidents in Copperbelt Province and one in Lusaka Province, where PF officials used vehicles with or without number plates for party activities.**

Stoppage of Party Activities

- **There were 3 incidents of candidate or party meetings or activities being prevented for COVID-19 reasons.** One meeting/activity was by an independent candidate and the other 2 were UPND activities, which were stopped due to alleged non-adherence to COVID-19 measures.
- **There were 2 incidents where a political party activity meeting was stopped for non-COVID reasons.** One was a PF meeting which was stopped by the Office of the President and one was a UPND event, with the reason cited that the event would cause confusion in the area during the Youth Day commemoration event.

Inappropriate Party Support by Religious, Traditional or Government Officials/Employees

- **Five percent (5%) of CCMG observers witnessed or heard of instances of traditional or religious leaders using their influence to support a particular party or candidate.**
 - One incident was by a Pentecostal pastor in support of PF and one was United Church of Zambia leaders in support of UPND.
 - Four incidents involved traditional leaders in support of PF and one involved a traditional leader in support of an independent candidate.
- **There were two incidents of government employees or officials asking community members to support PF.**
- **A senior civil servant is reported to have attended PF meeting in Lusaka Province.**

Handouts/inducements

- **Multiple political parties provided handouts to voters, with twenty-three percent (23%) of CCMG observers witnessing or hearing of distribution of money, food stuffs or other items/goods as an inducement to support a political party or candidate.** The handouts occurred throughout the country, with reports citing PF (10 provinces), UPND (5 provinces), the Socialist Party (2 provinces) and MMD (1 province) as providing handouts, as well as independent candidates in 3 provinces.

Campaigning

- **Multiple political parties engaged in what the observers deemed campaigning activities outside of the campaign period, including both PF and UPND.**

While CCMG notes that the overall number of concerning incidents at this point in the pre-election period is low, any level of politically-motivated violence, abusive language, use of military attire and arming of party supporters, and other violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct or other offenses, is concerning and should be taken seriously by all stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), political parties, civil society and faith-based organisations so that it does not escalate. With the launch of the official campaign period in May 2021, CCMG calls on all stakeholders to abide by the Electoral Code of Conduct and for duty-bearers to take concrete steps to ensure a credible, transparent and accountable pre-election period.



CCMG further calls on traditional and religious leaders to remain politically neutral and to use their influence to promote peaceful engagement in electoral processes. CCMG also calls on all government employees to remain politically neutral, avoid endorsing candidates and to refrain from attending party events and using government vehicles for party activities, as it is clear from the observer report that not all are doing so.

As key stakeholders in the electoral process, CCMG calls on political parties to hold their members accountable for any politically-motivated violence and other offenses, including the members' collection of voter's cards and vehicles with no number plates for party activities and in the case of PF, the use of government vehicles. CCMG appeals to the Zambia Police to promote peaceful participation in electoral activities, including parties' activities, and not to shut down a meeting due to COVID-19 protocols non-compliance unless an authorized Medical Officer of Health requests their assistance to do so, and until they have allowed parties to bring the activity into compliance. Finally, CCMG calls on the ECZ to take up the enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct and to demonstrate fairness and transparency in the application of the Code, including instruction to political parties to cease asking citizens for voter's card details or the cards themselves, per Statutory Instrument 80 of 2020.

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For CCMG's full report its Pre-Election Observation 8-28 March 2021 please visit CCMG's website at www.ccmgzambia.org